

THE SOUL'S RIDE.

"Horseman, springing from the dark;
Horseman, dying wild and free;
Tell me what shall be thy road,
Whither speedest far from me?"

"From the dark into the light,
From the small unto the great,
From the valleys dark I ride
O'er the hills to conquer fate!"

"Take me with thee, horseman mine!
Let me madly ride with thee!"
As he turned I met his eyes—
My own soul looked back at me!

—Lilla Cabot Perry in Atlantic.

BY HASSAR POST.

It was on a tributary of the Amazon, far up in the mysterious country, so bound, interlaced and entangled by the snake-like lianes that few men had the temerity or desire to penetrate it. The stream wound away, now in deep channels, now gliding over treacherous quicksands or leaping sunken rocks; hemmed in by the forest and luxuriant vegetation that fell over the edges and hung pendant in the stream, licking up the drift until veritable floating islands were formed, affording rest for turtles and other small animals. At rare intervals there was a beach where the sand had been thrown up in an eddy, presenting a sparkling and brilliant contrast to the green.

On such a beach lived Manuel Salvadea, famous as a hunter and fisherman. It was he who killed a jaguar single handed with his knife. It was Salvadea who swung across the roaring Matos upon a vine and saved seven or eight of his people from the flood, and it was he who, when held up as a hero, scorned the term and asked, "Is it not a man's duty to do right?" So it will be seen that this Indian was unique in his way, and his comrades or the people of his tribe looked upon him with something akin to reverence.

To secure Salvadea's services was a guarantee of game or fish; yet for a fisherman he entertained some peculiar ideas. He objected to taking fish for pleasure, and had been known to lift a comrade and hurl him into the water for killing a fish known as the hassar. He seemed to be the self constituted champion of the finny tribe. Why? Let him tell his own story:

"I protect the fishes, senior, because they cared for me when I was helpless. If an animal does you a service, you can but return it. I did not always think so; it was this way: Two years ago I lived on the upper branch of the Querto, the little stream which we believe rises far away in the up country, where the white peaks reach toward the heavens. In the season the river was low, and then we caught turtle, iguana, and the game upon which we live. I knew of a certain place where game was plenty, and one day, without saying a word, I left the camp and paddled down the river, and leaving the canoe tied to a liane cut my way across country to the spot. You know, senior, that the water is always washing away the banks and undermining the trees. Well, so it was on the little river. When I reached it I found it lower than ever; so low that the sand was bare in places, and pools were left everywhere alive with fish.

"As I unloaded my basket and net I heard a loud crash, and turning to see the cause, saw a large mona tree falling upon me. It was too late to escape, so I threw myself upon the sands. The next hours were a deep sleep. I knew nothing, and when I awoke it was dark. I was lying partly in the water and over my leg was a branch of the tree. I was powerless and could not move, and I knew a rain would produce a freshet that would cover me ten feet deep in as many minutes. All this, senior, came over me—a sudden dream. It was useless to shout, as I was miles away and had taken good care to tell no one where I had gone. Morning came, and I then saw my condition fully. I was held by my legs and right arm; my left arm was free, but I could not reach the sand as fast as they say our kinsmen in the north country bound their victims for sacrifice. At the end of the day I was very weak and ate the leaves.

"The next day I ate the mud and water and some worms which I found. The stream was growing lower, the water about me evaporating in the hot sun, and the insects bade fair to destroy me. At night the jaguar's cry fell upon my ear, and every rustle of the leaves, the sighing of the wind, aroused me. Did you ever hear the leaves talk, senior? They do, though it is only at certain times that we can interpret them; our nerves must be turned to a higher tension, as Father Moreno says; then we can respond to them. I never heard before. The leaves made music, the wind sighed among the lianes, and soft notes rose everywhere, and I imagined they were talking to me.

"Five days had passed, the water was gone and I was so weak that I waited for death. As the sun rose, and I was thinking how hard it was to give up life, I felt something touch my hand. At first I thought it imagination, then by an effort I turned my head—Santa Maria!—to see a miracle. On my outstretched hand was a fish we call the hassar. It had crawled into it, and lay panting, opening and shutting its gills and looking at me with its dark eyes. I thought I must be dreaming, but I clinched the fish, which slipped away, but I caught it again and ate it. It came to me a sacrifice, gave itself to save me, and when I looked around again to listen to a new rustling sound, and I saw that the ground was covered with fishes, all moving slowly down the dry bed of the stream, standing erect upon their fins in search of water. They came by hundreds, climbed over me, falling upon my face, and I caught them, ate them and piled them up about me.

"Hope was raised again; yet I could not move, and my only chance was that some one would find me. Days passed, and I lingered on. I had dug a hole with my free hand, and enough water oozed through to sustain me, while the fishes that still crawled by me provided

me with food. How long it was I know not; but one day I saw above the trees a smoke, and I knew that my people were near. I was too weak to cry aloud, so I lay and watched. The fishes still went on and I passed the hours by counting them and watching their curious ways. They used the two fins like arms or legs, sometimes toppling over upon their sides; now entering the little pools to refresh themselves, but soon leaving the water to crawl along again.

"While I watched them it came to me that they were going to the mouth of the river to avoid the drought, and could I not send a message to my people? It was an easy matter to tear my shirt, and with my teeth I shaped bits of white cloth until I had a hundred or more. Then I began to catch the fish. Every one that passed me left with a bit of white cloth pushed upon the spine of its upper fin. The next day I did the same, and for three days I sent these messengers to my people. The fish were black, senior, and the white cloth could be seen quite a distance.

"The days went by, how many I know not, when one night I dreamed that I saw my friends. I awoke to see a great light and in the center the one I loved best; then I must have died of joy. But I lived, senior, and here the tall Indian threw his arm about a young girl whose dark eyes gleamed with terror at the memories aroused. "She, my wife, found me and the message was carried to her by the hassars. So, senior, the fish saved my life, brought me my wife. What would you have me do? Forget them? I think not."

Such was the romance and almost tragedy of Salvadea. He had been crushed by the tree for nearly two weeks. His people had searched far and near without success, and when the canoe was found it was supposed he had fallen overboard and was lost. But there was one who did not give up. She wandered farther down the stream than the others, and one day pushed her canoe up a little stream, rapidly growing dry, to catch a turtle. Here she was attracted by the hassars that were coming down overland and escaping into the main water. While she watched them she noticed one with a white object upon its fin, then another. Catching the fish, she saw that it was no accident, but an intentional decoration. Following up she saw others, and soon recognized the fact that it was a message from some one—possibly the lost one.

Up the stream she went, sinking in the soft mud over which the fishes had safely passed; crossing quicksands, leaping from trunk to trunk until she finally found her lover apparently dead—so near it that it was months before he walked. With her hands she dug the sand and mud away, and then bore his emaciated form (breaking a passage through the lianes) to the camp. No wonder he looked at her with loving eyes, and no wonder he protected the hassars.

Salvadea's story might seem a fiction of the Amazon, but the habit of the hassars and other catfishes of leaving the water and crawling overland is a common one, and is equally well known in India in the climbing perch. The fish do not carry water in their gills during these overland journeys, as is generally supposed, but breathe air and for the time are true amphibians.—Charles Frederick Holder in New York Evening Post.

An Inexpensive Art Corner.

Quite the gem of the furnishings in the parlor of a pretty apartment up town is a lovely statuette of Cupid standing on a pedestal, behind which is draped in loose folds crimson cloth as an effective background. The peculiar tint of the marble (?) attracted a visitor, who inquired concerning it, whereupon the mistress confessed:

"I saw in some paper that to brush a plaster cast with orange shellac diluted with alcohol would impart this peculiar creamy tint, like old ivory, and chancing upon this excellent reproduction in plaster, I bought it for experiment. You see how successful I have been. Every one admires the color of my boy so much. And I'll tell you a bit more. That rich crimson drapery is a last year's dress, which faded in streaks. I had it dyed, and evolved the rest of my art corner."

—Her Point of View in New York Times.

The "Gold Snake."

A Mexican superstition, very common among miners in that country, relates to the "gold snake." This species of serpent is perfectly harmless and very handsome, being green in color and with a golden iridescence in its scales. Faith is entertained that wherever a gold snake makes its nest there is a ledge containing the precious metal, and there are many miners who will locate a claim at once if they find a gold snake.

—Interview in Washington Star.

Once Honored.

Once before being placed in his tomb every Parisian may be the recipient of homage as profound as would be given to a potentate. It is when going to his own funeral. Men uncover their heads and women devoutly cross themselves while the hearse is passing. This is true even of the drivers of tram cars, buses and drays, and of the maids in white caps.—New York Sun.

Took the Prescription.

Poor Patient (after an examination)—Doctor, is there much the matter with me?

Doctor—Nothing but the effects of care and worry. You must reduce your expenses so as to live within your income.

Patient—I'll begin now. Here's ten cents. Good day.—Exchange.

French and the German Language.

One gets an idea of the feeling of the French toward the Germans when, in the hope of getting around a conversational blockade, he addresses them in German. However polite the refusal to speak in that tongue, it is accompanied by a perceptible air of resentment.—Exchange.



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